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POETRY.

Left Alone at Eighty.

What did you say, dear breakfast?
Somehow I've slept too late;
You are very kind, dear Ellie,
Go, tell them not to wait.
I'll dress as quick as ever I can,
My heart's a little more
And Polly, who used to help, dear heart,
Lies dead on the side of the floor.

Put up the old pipe, deary,
I couldn't smoke to day;
I'm sort of dazed and frightened,
And don't know what to say.
It's lonesome in the house here,
And lonesome out of door—
I never knew what lonesome meant,
In all my life, before.

The bees go humming the whole day long,
And the first June rose has blown,
And I am eighty, dear Lord, to day,
Too old to be left alone!

O, heart of love! so still and cold,
Lips! so white—
For the first sad hours in sixty years
You were out of my reach last night.

You've cut the flower. You're very kind,
I've needed it less
It was only a slip—I pulled the rose
And threw the stem away;
But she, sweet thirty, bent down
And planted it where she stood:
"Dear, maybe the flowers are living," she said,
"Asleep in this bit of wood."

I can't rest, deary—I cannot rest,
Let the old man have his will,
And wander from porch to garden post—
The house is so dead, it's still;
Wander, and long for a sign of the gate,
She has left ajar for me—
We had got so used to each other, dear,
So used to each other, you see.

Sixty years, and so wise and good,
She made me a better man
From the moment I kissed her fair young face,
And our lovers' life began.

And seven fine days she has given me,
And out of the seven, not one
But the noblest father in all the land
Would be proud to call his son.

O, well, dear Lord, I'll be patient,
But I feel sore indeed,
At eighty years it's an awesome thing
To drain such a bitter cup.

I know there's Joseph and John and Hal,
And four good men beside,
But a hundred sons can't be to me
Like the woman I made my bride.

My little Polly, so bright and fair—
So winsome and good and sweet—
She had roses twined in her sunny hair,
White blossoms on her dainty feet;
And I held her hand—was it yesterday
That we stood up to wed?
And—No, I remember, I'm eighty to day,
And my dear wife Polly is dead!

Miscellany.

From the Christian Union.

Miss Plumtree's Magic Lantern.

There certainly was something very peculiar about Miss Perugia Plumtree; every one observed it, and it became more and more striking as time went on. It was not that you could not tell what she might do or say under painful circumstances—that would have left her very common-place indeed. The very peculiarity was that at those times you might be sure of her always doing and saying the very something. Miss Plumtree was one of those gentle souls in whom the lookers-on can discern no need of discipline, and yet to whom affliction mysteriously takes the form of a trip-hammer, sure to fall at regular intervals and with relentless weight. Or, perhaps, to Miss Plumtree, it came rather like some grim guardian of the night, prowling at stated intervals with the stern fiat, "lights out!" and so throwing all her peaceful arrangements into sudden eclipse. But no sooner did some new grief or some fresh reverse swoop all her former joys under its dreary shadow, than Miss Plumtree immediately produced from under her meek little heart a sort of psychological magic lantern, illuminated it with one of the most beautiful of smiles, and suddenly a view of something new and delightful that nobody else had ever thought of, was thrown upon the great darkness, brilliant and magnificent manifold.

It was with one of those illuminating smiles, enough to make a rainbow of the tear she was wiping at the moment, that she turned upon the friends who left her on the threshold of her echoing house, after the last sad ceremonies had been rendered to the last remaining member of her family.

"I'm sure I don't know what I ever should have done," she said, "if it had not been for the old house falling to my lot. So kindly ordered! I don't know how I could have borne it to go anywhere else!"

And with this quiet transfer of her affections, Miss Plumtree set herself briskly about the care of their new object, until she seemed to make it shine brighter and brighter every day. She could not care for occupation with all the cares that come where there is no man about the

house; and as for loneliness, there was no chance for that, while there were so many traveling clergymen to be "put up," and neighbors going away and wanting to leave the children a few days, and distant relatives needing a home a little while. So Miss Plumtree's days glided swiftly and happily by, very happily she thought, and she used to have a little season of thinking about it every evening, as the twilight gathered, sitting alone in her own room, with her face pressed close against the window that looked out upon the lawn. Some maiden sisters, left with such store of silver and household valuables as Miss Plumtree, would have shrunk with horror from a room on the first-floor, with a door opening directly out upon the gladiolus bed; but it was beautiful to Miss Plumtree, since an accident she had met with, a few years before, though it had left her as good as new in all other respects, had made going up and down stairs a troublesome affair.

"I don't know what I ever should have done if it hadn't been for this room lying just so," she said one evening, as the hour came and she drew her little arm chair to the window and took her seat; and then from thinking about the room, she fell slowly into a reverie, until as the gladiolus bed grew more and more indistinct outside, the ghost of time and things that had been stopt slowly out of the twilight of the past and ranged themselves one by one before her. How happy they had all been together in those days gone by! And then when her mother was taken away, how the rest clung together, she and her father and Jack! How proud she was of Jack, and how satisfied that the will left everything to him, with the understanding that he was always to take care of her as her father had. And then Jack began to go wrong, dreadfully wrong, the neighbors said, and when her father threatened to disinherit him, he got possession of the will and ran away. She did not know what she should have done then, if it had not been for her father. So kindly ordered that they were left to each other! There might have been one more, one handsomer and dearer even than Jack, but her father, so kind to her and so hard to others, had driven him away too; had believed something false of him; and sworn that never so long as he lived should he see his daughter's face with his consent. So he had gone away too, not like Jack, in a passion, but sorrowful enough, and Miss Plumtree did not suppose he would ever come back. And now even her father was taken, but she had the home with plenty of means to keep it up, and cousin Periwinkle spending the winter with her—that had all been arranged (except cousin Periwinkle) by the new will made after poor dear Jack ran away—and she thought—very likely by next summer—hark! What foot-fall was that on the dry grass, and what form moving stealthily over the lawn in the starlight?

Miss Plumtree pressed her face closer to the pane—the figure passed out of sight, then turned and came slowly down the path again. She sprang to the door and opened it.

"Jack! Dear Jack!" But the figure was gone and there was no answer. In another moment she had mounted the stairs without thinking whether it was long or not, and stood in the passage-way that divided cousin Periwinkle's room from the spare chamber, with a pair of the best linen sheets in her hand. "Dear cousin Periwinkle," she exclaimed, as well as she could, with great bumping at her heart. "Jack has come home! Don't tell me I am mistaken! I should know him if I only saw his shadow! He would not come when I called him, but that was only one of his odd ways. So I am just going to get his room ready without saying anything to the servants, for I know he'll be coming pretty soon, to say he forgives me for everything, and will let me share with him just as if nothing had ever happened," and Miss Plumtree disappeared into the spare room. In a few moments she was back again to say that cousin Periwinkle was to go to sleep without minding her, for she should sit up awhile to listen for Jack.

"I do feel a little nervous, though," she added, lighting up into one of her smiles. "I don't know what I should do, if you weren't spending a little time with me, cousin Periwinkle."

Miss Plumtree listened in vain; no knock was heard at the door, not another rustling of the grass outside the window. But the next day all the town was astir with news. Jack Plumtree had come back with the old will in his possession and was trying to prove a flaw in the second, and eject his sister from the Plumtree estate. Unfortunately it is easier to prove evil than good, and Miss Plumtree was very soon notified that she had one week's grace in which to resign all claims and vacate the ancestral halls. At the end of that time, the friends who had accompanied her home on the day of the funeral wended their way to a little cottage which had come to Miss Plumtree from her mother's side, to see where she had taken refuge and how she had survived the storm. But she did not get out her lantern in advance of them and illuminated everything until they hardly recognized the situation.

There she stood, in the middle of the little bare floor, with the irradiating smile on her face, the two silver candlesticks and the oval mirror, that had been her mother's, shining, the stove and the window shining, and Miss Plumtree's canary singing merrily in its cage.

"I'm sure I don't know what I ever should have done," she said, "if it hadn't been for the cottage! So kindly ordered!"

No longer encumbered with servants or relations, Miss Plumtree managed to live delightfully in her new quarters, and never admitted that she missed a single comfort; until one day the news came that the savings bank, where her tiny maternal fortune was treasured, had failed, and not a penny was left. For one moment Miss Plumtree stood still as she listened to the tale; but in another the magic lantern was produced, and a new object thrown in bold and brilliant relief upon the shadowy foreground of her future.

"I'm sure I don't know what I should do now, if I hadn't amused myself once by learning dress-making!" So kindly ordered! she said, with such a smile that people were almost ready to believe that this was the pleasantest thing that ever happened to her. From that day Miss Plumtree no longer lived alone.

Every morning she flipped forth, work-bag in hand, and tripped like a little business woman, as she was, to one house or another as her engagements might demand. Every one thought it a pleasure to see her sitting by their work-table; her form was graceful yet, and the way her hair drawn back from her forehead and knotted carefully behind, gave such a classic contour to her head. These were her only beauties, except the smile, and that made every one feel as if the sun shone on the darkest day.

And so all went on beautifully for a time, until Miss Plumtree began to find herself inconvenienced by a severe pain in one of her eyes. Sometimes she came to her work with a green shade over it, sometimes she did not come at all, and at last was obliged to give herself fairly into the physician's hands. For a few weeks she sat alone at home once more; after that the pain ceased and she felt quite well again, but the sight of the unruly member was gone for aye. Miss Plumtree immediately looked up her little book of engagements, and appeared next morning at the door where she had been promised for that day, three months before, the illumination lighting up everything before her.

"I don't know what I ever should have done," she said, "if it hadn't been for my having another eye."

Miss Plumtree had given up the habit of sitting with her face against the pane, ever since the night she had seen the shadowy figure pass along the rustling grass. But she still kept up her little twilight season of thinking over matters, and how kindly everything had been ordered for her ever since she could remember.

"But poor dear Jack!" She had

been so happy in thinking of his having everything, and now she heard he was running it through very fast, and sure to get into trouble before long. She wondered if he would ever consent to come and share with her if the worst came to the worst. She was afraid he would not, everything would seem such a change! And there was some one else! How changed every thing would seem to him—to Philip!—if he were ever to come back! But he could not have heard that there was no one now to interfere. She did not think he would ever hear; probably he had gone a great way off and would never know.

One November night Miss Plumtree as usual slept her twilight thoughts quietly away and awoke to find a great surprise awaiting her. An invitation from some friends living fifty miles away, to come and pass a few days with them. It was the first invitation of any kind Miss Plumtree had received since she left the old house, and she really did not feel that she ought to have any, now that she had no longer any hospitality to offer. But here was the letter, very positive indeed, and refusing to take no for an answer. So she put some things in a satchel and set off the next morning by the daily stage.

"I shall certainly be back the last day of the month," she said, "for I am engaged all the first week in December. The days glided by as such days will do, the oasis seeming smaller for its very greenness in the desert. The last day of the month arrived, the returning stage was heard rattling down the village hill, and there, on the driver's box, her nose a little red with the cold, but luxuriating in the free, fresh air, sat Miss Plumtree, punctual to the hour and minute. How good it would seem to see the little cottage again! They should make it in another minute, but Deacon Cranberry's horse was so much higher, it cut off the view just here. Now they were passing the deacon's, and Miss Plumtree began to look under the apron for her satchel.

"Jerusalem!" exclaimed the driver, and Miss Plumtree looked quickly up. A fallen chimney, a few blackened timbers and a little curl of smoke were all that was left of the cottage. The two silver candlesticks, the oval mirror—all were gone, only the canary bird, fortunately left at the deacon's, and nothing for Miss Plumtree but to take shelter under the same kindly roof until she could have time to think what must be done next. The ensuing day was Sunday, and when the deacon's wife knocked at Miss Plumtree's door, she found her bonnetted and cloakd, the illumination in full play and Miss Plumtree only waiting for the second bell. "I'm sure I ought to go," she said, with a smile which the deacon's wife declared more beautiful than ever, "for I don't know what I should have done if it hadn't been for saving the things in my satchel. So kindly ordered."

So she went, and when the day had passed peacefully by and the short December twilight was gathering she slipped away to her own room for her little season belonging to the hour. What strange things were happening all the time. And how strange it was that the cottage had been burned just as the old homestead was to be sold for Jack's debts and he had gone away without her being able to ask him if he would forgive all and share with her. Poor dear Jack! But there was always something left and as soon as Monday came she must think what was to be done. Just then the deacon tapped apologetically at the door.

"Come in," said Miss Plumtree, and he opened it a crack and looked in.

"Miss Plumtree," he said, "there is some one asking for you—some one —" and the deacon hesitated and blew his nose, then laughed a little and began again. "Some one that I think you used to know—I ought not to be positive, but perhaps—"

The deacon stopped again and a figure standing between the hall lamp and Miss Plumtree's room threw a shadow on the curtain. She had said once she should know a shadow; this time she did know it and sprang towards the reality.

"Philip! then you lie still after all!" One week from that day friends once more escorted Miss Plumtree to the door of her olden home, but this time as a blushing bride introduced by her husband to the house he had purchased as her wedding gift. Once more she turned and illuminated everything with her smile.

"I don't know what I should have done," she said, "if it hadn't been for Philip, for really there were only a few things in the satchel after all, and I shouldn't have thought it right to stay at the deacon's very long."

Slavery's First Defeat.

Perley, the Washington correspondent of the Boston Journal, gives the following interesting reminiscence:

The appointment by the President of Judge Orr as Minister Plenipotentiary to his Imperial Majesty the Emperor of all the Russias, recalls the eventful scenes of the Thirty-fifth Congress, in which he presided over the House as its Speaker, and especially the turning contest of the anti-slavery struggle on Monday, the 8th of February, 1858. It was the great question whether Buchanan's message on the Lee-Compton constitution of Kansas should be referred to the Democratic committee on Territories or to a select committee of fifteen.

On this there had been an angry discussion on the preceding Saturday prolonged through the night and embittered by a regular row at a very early hour on Sunday morning in which a member—not Grow, of Pennsylvania, although he had a gold medal presented to him therefor—knocked Keitt down, while the wig of Backs-dale was snatched from his head and sent spinning up nearly to the ceiling.

Speaker Orr shouted at the top of his stentorian voice "order! order!" and Sergeant at Arms Gloss-brenner, a Pennsylvania Dutchman, who was here as a representative in the last Congress, seizing the huge mace as the emblem of his authority with both hands, rushed into the midst of the melee and was hustled unceremoniously about, mace and all. Old General Quitman finally stilled the tumult, but it was not until half-past six on Sunday morning that the Democrats would agree to pass his resolution that a vote should be taken on Monday, without further debate, delay or dilatory motion. When Mr. Orr's mallet rapped the House to order at noon on Monday only six of the two hundred and thirty-four representatives were absent and the galleries were packed like boxes of Smyrna figs. Dr. Samson made a conciliatory prayer, the journal was read, two enrolled bills were presented by Mr. Davidson, and the Speaker, in an unusually earnest tone, stated the question. Tellers had been ordered and he appointed Messrs. Buffinton, of Massachusetts, and Craige, of North Carolina.

"Is the demand for the previous question seconded?" The imposing form of Buffinton was seen making his way down to the area before the Speaker's table, where Craige met him. The two shook hands and there was then a quick obedience to the Speaker's request that gentlemen in favor of the motion would pass between the tellers. Father Giddings, crowned with silvery locks, led the Republican host down to be counted as they passed between Buffinton and Craige. Burlingame followed and among others who filed along were Henry Winter Davis, Gen. Spinner, John Sherman, Gen. Bingham, Frank Blair, the trio of Washburns, Gooch, Schuyler Colfax, John Covode, Gov. Fenton, Senator Craige and burly Humphrey Marshall. When all had passed between the tellers Buffinton wheeled about and reported to the Speaker, who announced the result rather hesitatingly: "One hundred and ten in the affirmative; those opposed will now pass between the tellers."

Then the Southern champions of slavery with their Northern allies came trooping down, headed by the attenuated Stephens. Dan Sickles and John Cochrane, who were afterward Generals in the Union armies, were then allied with Zollicoffer, Keitt and others who fell in the rebel ranks, and there were so many of them that the result appeared doubtful. At last it was Mr. Craige's turn

to report, and then all was silent as the grave.

Never before had I seen the Speaker at all disconcerted, but he hesitated and his usual loud, clear voice hesitated as he at last announced: "One hundred and four in the negative. The ayes have it, and the demand for the previous question is seconded. Shall the main question be now put?"

Victory had at last favored freedom. The main question was now put and the vote by ayes and noes on reference of the Kansas question to the committee on Territories was: ayes 113, nays 114. Then came the vote on the reference to a select committee of fifteen, and Speaker Orr had to announce the result: ayes 114, nays 111; and from that hour the power of Democracy has waned. Mr. Orr endeavored to remain true to the Union but was swept into the maelstrom of secession, from which he escaped at the earliest possible moment, although he has never, I believe, been allied with the existing state government of South Carolina.

The following extract from the Debates of the Constitutional Convention is laid before the readers of the JOURNAL because the facts stated are of great import, although the section was not adopted. The question will recur to all: "What is to be done for the unfortunate children that are below the common schools?"

In the Constitutional Convention the Article on Education being under consideration, the 7th section was read, as follows:

Sec. 7. The Legislature may establish industrial schools and require the attendance therein, of vagrant, neglected and abandoned children.

Mr. Wherry.—Mr. Chairman: I desire to offer a few words of explanation with regard to this section, especially in view of its relation to the following clause, section seven, with which it is intimately connected. However unwilling we may be to recognize the fact, however distasteful it may be to gentlemen of tender sensibilities to hear it said, there are two distinct classes of children in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, alike demanding her guardianship, her fostering care, her elevating influences. There is that class for which provision has been so nobly and so effectively made; the hundreds of thousands of well fed and well clothed innocent, hopeful, happy children who do now attend the public schools, or may attend them, who are educated in the common schools or may be educated there, if their parents desire it, and if not, are educated by other means at private expense in private schools. But, sir, down underneath this, in dirt and despondency, suffering the realities of cruel want, and breathing an atmosphere of vice, there is lower stratum. It is but idle vanity and unwise statesmanship to longer ignore the unpleasant fact that there is a large class of children in this Commonwealth who, by reason of the ignorance, the indifference, the idleness, the impenitency or the vices of their parents and guardians, are absolutely hindered from attending the common schools of this State. It is to provide for that class of children that this section is drawn.

For these we want compulsory education. We want a system that will require and achieve the moral, mental and industrial education of these neglected and abandoned children, and save them from a doomed inheritance of want, and crime and woe!

This is all this section is intended to provide for, and it has nothing to do, directly, with the common school system of the State, as we now understand it.

Mr. Hazard.—But where are the children?

Mr. Wherry.—All over the State, in every city, town and county. Of this class of children you find twenty thousand reported to the school authorities of this city alone.

There are in my county alone no less than twelve hundred and thirteen children between the ages of ten and twenty-one, who cannot read—a thousand, at least, of these, owing to the criminal neglect of their parents,